

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WELLIN 01032 160449Z

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SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER ROWLING TELEVISION INTERVIEW ON VIETNAM

1. SUMMARY-IN APRIL 4 TELEVISION INTERVIEW PM ROWLING REPLIED TO WIDE RANGE OF VIETNAM RELATED QUESTIONS. SIGNIFICANT POINTS COVERED GNZ WILLINGNESS TO ASSIST VIETNAM IN RECONSTRUCTION "AT A LATER STAGE". ROWLING TERMED BOTH CAMBODIAN AND VIETNAMESE CONFLICTS AS ESSENTIALLY CIVIL WARS. END SUMMARY.

2. EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW FOLLOW:

QUESTION: WOULD NEW ZEALAND SEND MILITARY PERSONNEL THERE IN A NON FIGHTING ROLE, IF REQUESTED?

ROWLING; THE ONLY PEOPLE THAT I COULD ENVISAGE GOING IN THERE AT ALL WOULD BE IN THE MEDICAL FIELD...AT A LATER STAGE, THE POSSIBILITY OF CONSTRUCTION PEOPLE BEING INVOLVED IN MAYBE THE REESTABLISHMENT OF HOSPITALS OR COMMUNICATIONS, BUT THERE'S NOTHING OF THIS KIND UNDER CONSIDERATION AT THE MOMENT. OUR IMMEDIATE PROBLEM IS A REFUGEE PROBLEM WHICH INCLUDES THIS VERY VEXED QUESTION OF THE ORPHANS, OF COURSE, AND WHAT WE WANT TO
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PAGE 02 WELLIN 01032 160449Z

DO WITHIN OUR PHYSICAL, FINANCIAL CAPACITY IS DO THE BEST WE CAN FOR THE MOST PEOPLE IN THAT VERY UNHAPPY REGION.

QUESTION: I KNOW YOU DONT ACCEPT THE DOMINO THEORY THAT THE FIGHTING COULD SPILL OVER BUT, HAS THE CABINET OR THE GOVERNMENT GIVEN ANY CONSIDERATION TO WHAT HAPPENS IF IT DOES SPILL OVER? WILL WE SEND TROOPS TO THAILAND UNDER THE SEATO AGREEMENT?

ROWLING: WELL, THE SEATO TREATY HAS LARGELY BECOME ONE OF VERY POSITIVE ECONOMIC AID RATHER THAN MILITARY ALLIANCE.

QUESTION: BUT THE TREATY STILL EXISTS?

ROWLING: OH, THE TREATY STILL EXISTS AND INDEED, THERE IS A PROVISION WITHIN THE TREATY WITH REGARD TO AN OVERT ATTACK ON ANY MEMBER NATION. IF THIS HAPPENS, IT REQUIRES THE UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT OF ALL THE MEMBERS, AH, THAT SOME ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN TO PROTECT THE MEMBER CONCERNED...AND THEN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE MANILA PACT HAVE TO DETERMINE WHAT THEIR OWN ACTION IS.

QUESTION. WHAT WOULD NEW ZEALAND'S ACTION BE?

ROWLING: WELL, YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING THAT I DON'T ACCEPT AT THE MOMENT AS A POSSIBILITY, BECAUSE THE TWO DISTURBANCES ESSENTIALLY IN INDOCHINA AT THE MOMENT, BOTH IN CAMBODA AND IN VIETNAM, ARE IN THE NATURE OF CIVIL WARS. THE MANILA PACT ENVISAGED A SITUATION WHERE THERE WAS AGGRESSION FROM OUTSIDE A COUNTRY BY ANOTHER POWER.

QUESTION: YOU SAY THEY'RE CIVIL WARS, MR ROWLING, BUT NEW ZEALAND HAS AN AMBASSADOR IN SAIGON, IT'S ALSO RECOGNIZED NORTH VIETNAM...DOESNT THIS RECOGNIZE THE DISTINCTION OF THE TWO COUNTRIES?

ROWLING: WELL, THE DISTINCTION WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1954, OF COURSE, WITH THE GENVA ACCORDS. BUT, I THINK IT'S WORTH REMINDING OURSELVES THAT PRIOR TO THE GENEVA ACCORDS VIETNAM WAS ONE COUNTRY, THAT IT WASN'T THE VIETNAMESE WHO DIVIDED THE COUNTRY INTO NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM...IT
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PAGE 03 WELLIN 01032 160449Z

WAS THE NATIONS IN THE GENEVA ACCORDS, A MEETING THAT WAS CO-CHAIRLED BY THE UNITED KINGDOM AND RUSSIA..THAT DREW THE DIVIDING LINE IN 1954 THAT TOLD THE PEOPLE THAT THERE WOULD BE AN ELECTION TO DECIDE WHO WOULD GOVERN THE WHOLE COUNTRY IN 1956. WELL, WE'VE GONE A LONG WAY SINCE THEN AND REGRETABLELY, ALL THAT HAS REALLY HAPPENED IS MORE MISERY AND MORE LOSS OF LIFE.
KILLGORE

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